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Colombia

Market Development Reports

Latin American Trade Mission Visits Colombia

2000

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Report Highlights:

USDA Latin American Trade Mission Visits Colombia.

Includes PSD changes: No
Includes Trade Matrix: No
Unscheduled Report
Bogota [CO1], CO

The USDA Latin American Trade Mission, headed by FAS Associate Administrator Patrick Steel, visited Bogota during September 26-28, 2000, as part of a four-country tour, including Argentina, Colombia, Venezuela and Costa Rica. This was a major event for the U.S. Embassy and Colombian importers of agricultural and processed food products, since visits by large international trade delegations are infrequent in Bogota. Colombia is very important to U.S. agricultural exporters, however, since it is the largest market for our products in Latin America after Mexico, with imports of \$446 million in 1999.

The 31-company U.S. delegation, was accompanied by Mattie Sharpless, FAS Special Envoy to Emerging Economies, several FAS specialists, and representatives from the U.S. Poultry and Egg Export Council, the U.S. Dairy Export Council, the USA Rice Federation, the U.S. Rice Producers Association and the Southern U.S. Trade Association. The main day of activities on September 27th began with opening remarks by the Colombian Vice Minister of Agriculture Luis Arango, the Deputy Chief of Mission of the U.S. Embassy in Colombia Barbara Moore, and Associate Administrator Patrick Steel. This was followed by presentations by the FAS experts on Commodity Credit Cooperation programs, transportation and cold chain practices.

The main event was a full afternoon of one-on-one business meetings between U.S. companies and the 175 visitors from key Colombian companies in attendance. Strong interest in the products being offered by the U.S. companies was evident in the heavy turnout of Colombian companies. The U.S. companies had an average of 8 business meetings during the afternoon, with three companies having 14 each. U.S. Ambassador to Colombia Anne Patterson stopped by the afternoon's activities to chat with U.S. companies and also hosted an elegant reception that evening at her residence, with 200 people in attendance.

The group's visit to Bogota was finished up the next day with a morning visit to an Exito hypermarket, which gave the team members insight into the world-class nature of the food retail sector in Colombia. The groups left the country with a better feel for the challenges of doing business in Colombia and with numerous solid business contacts, which we expect will result in significant export sales in the near future.